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# ENG 5260-001: Communication in Science and Technical Organizations

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*Eastern Illinois University*

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## **CMN/ENG 5260: Communication in Science & Technical Organizations**

### **FALL 2014 | (3 credit hours)**

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<b>Office hours:</b>	Tues 11–12 Wed 11–12 Thurs 11–12 and 2–4	Mon 9–10 am and 1–2 pm Tues 1–3:30 pm Wed 9–10 am and 1–2 pm Fri 9–10 am, 1–2 pm and 3–5 pm

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This graduate course looks beyond academic writing to the types of communication professionals use in their careers. The course will introduce students to practices and principles of audience-centered communication within organizational settings. The applied and strategic nature of this communication will be emphasized throughout the course, and students will learn to communicate scientific and technical information to internal and external stakeholders. Thus, the broad content areas covered in the class will include organizational communication, professional writing, technical writing, and public relations. Because this course is required for master's students in the Sustainable Energy program, the major projects for this course will focus primarily on energy and environmental communication.

By the end of the semester, you should be able to

1. Understand and apply core principles used by experienced professionals when writing or speaking in the workplace;
2. Understand and apply the communication processes—such as public relations, risk communication, and crisis communication—in organizational environments;
3. Develop strategies for communicating effectively with teams, stakeholders, and clients; and
4. Apply principles and theories from the course to hypothetical and client-based projects, mostly drawn from the energy and environmental sectors.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

#### **Reading Material:**

Assigned readings will either be posted to Desire 2 Learn or available in the course texts:

- *Handbook of Technical Writing*, 8<sup>th</sup> edition (Alred)
- *Corporate Advocacy: Rhetoric in the Information Age* (Hoover)

You are expected to read thoughtfully all assigned material in preparation for class discussion. The success of this class will depend on the quality of discussion, for which your preparation is essential.

**Assignments:**

1. In-class participation-10% of grade (100 points)
2. Homework-External writing assignments-20% of grade (200 points)
3. CENCERE Social Media Proposal-20% of grade (200 points)
4. Environmental Advocacy Campaign and Presentations-30% of grade (300 points)
5. Crisis Management Case Study-20% of grade (200 points)

**Grading Scale:**

900-1000	A
800-899	B
700-799	C
600-699	D

As noted in the graduate catalog, grades of A and B reflect the necessary level of competence for graduate credit.

**Expectations:** We expect you to review course readings carefully and critically to be prepared to discuss them in class. While there will be some lecturing, a substantial portion of class time will be dedicated to your thoughts/questions/participation. We also expect you to prepare written work with care. Be mindful of the assignment guidelines and consider your presentation (typed, grammar, clear sentences, etc.) as well as the essential content. Since we're a smaller class, the importance of class discussion and involvement is magnified; actions/behavior that are in conflict with this purpose such as loud outbursts, frequent texting, etc. will affect the class participation portion of the grade. Since you are graduate students in this class, our expectations for classroom decorum are higher. Consult the graduate catalog for other general expectations.

**Absences:** Prompt and regular attendance is expected. Students who do not attend regularly can expect that their final grade will be lowered. Class discussion is an important part of this course. If you must miss a class, you will need to advise us accordingly. We meet once a week in a condensed period of time and if you can let us know in advance of an anticipated absence, it is helpful in terms of making other arrangements. Attendance is critical for success in this class.

**Due Dates:**

- *Written weekly homework* will be due on **Sundays at Noon** so it can be returned to you by class time. Late work is generally not accepted.
- *Reading assignments* must be completed by class time on Tuesdays.
- Major assignments will be due on the dates/times listed on the syllabus.

Please contact us in advance of assignment due dates if you have conflicts/problems and appropriate documentation may be required.

**Academic Honesty:** Students are expected to maintain principles of academic integrity and conduct as defined in [EIU's Code of Conduct](#). Violations will be reported to the Office of Student Standards.

**Incompletes:** The grade of I will be given in cases where substantial work for the course has been completed and a documented situation prevents completion of the course by the end of the term.

**Learning Disability:** If you are a student with a documented disability in need of accommodations to fully participate in this class, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services (OSDS). All accommodations must be approved through OSDS. Please stop by Ninth Street Hall, Room 2006, or call 217-581-6583 to make an appointment.

**Cell Phone, Texting and Technology Policy:** There may be instances where technology may assist with an activity or discussion but, generally, if there is an emergency situation or other reason for the electronic devices to be ON, please advise us accordingly.

Week	Date	Topics	Deadlines
1	Aug 26	Publics and stakeholders Bottom-line organization	Reading
2	Sep 02	Organizational environments & legitimacy Writing for conciseness	Reading, weekly assignment
3	Sep 09	Writing internal documents	Reading, weekly assignment
4	Sep 16	Writing for the public: social media	Reading, weekly assignment
5	Sep 23	Writing for the public: press releases Writing for conciseness	Reading, weekly assignment
6	Sep 30	Organizational ethics	Reading, <b>Social media recommendation report</b>
7	Oct 07	Corporate social responsibility Collaboration: Introduction	Reading, weekly assignment
8	Oct 14	Environmental advocacy campaigns Collaboration: Managing tasks and conflict	Reading, weekly assignment
9	Oct 21	Environmental advocacy campaigns	Reading, weekly assignment
10	Oct 28	Document design	Reading, weekly assignment
11	Nov 04	Communicating with the media Giving presentations	Reading, weekly assignment
12	Nov 11	<b>Formal presentations</b>	<b>Environmental advocacy campaign due</b>
13	Nov 18	Crisis and crisis response	Reading, weekly assignment
<b>Thanksgiving Week</b>			
14	Dec 02	Pre-crisis planning	Reading, weekly assignment
15	Dec 09	Communicating risks	<b>Crisis communication plan due</b>
16	Dec 16	Media interviews over crisis communication	TBA